D R A F T

THE LESSON OF DOG RIVER

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 10 kilometers north of Beirut, the Dog River (NAHR AL-KALB) flows into the Mediterranean. It is a small stream both in length and volume; and from the standpoint of the economy of the Middle East, or even of that of Lebanon, its value is negligible. It supplies some water to the city of Beirut, but beyond that it serves little purpose. Its waters turn no electric plants, irrigate no large tracts, nor do they provide fish for Arab stomachs. Yet, the Dog River is not without significance, for it is, in a sense, symbolic of the entire Middle East and of that area's history.

Since the dawn of recorded history, the lands rimming the eastern Mediterranean--the Middle East of modern parlance--, where civilization first arose, have been disputed by contending nations, by opposing armies. Here the air has echoed to the sound of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Pharoonic chariots, of the marching of Greek phalanxes and Roman legions, of the tramp of Byzontine, Arab, Mameluke, Turkish, English, and French armies. Most of these armies, in the course of their campaigns, have passed by the mouth of the Dog River; and near the sea, on the rocky walls of the ravine through which the river flows, many of them left a reminder of their passing: engraved inscriptions or sculptured reliefs to perpetuate the memory of their conquests. Today, the thoughtful Middle Easterner or, for that matter, any serious student of Middle Eastern affairs, when he reflects on the lesson of Dog River and, at the same time, on the current situation in the Middle East, must inevitably wonder if the Soviet Red Army will not be the next to add to the Dog River inscriptions.

The Soviet Union is today more active in Middle Eastern affairs than at any time in its 40 years of history. But this activity--sale of arms to Egypt and Syria, machinations in Jordan, increased tempo of diplomatic and propaganda action throughout the area--represents neither a new interest nor an interest which is peculiarly Soviet. It is rather merely the latest manifestation of a policy which the Communists inherited from the preceding

Tsarist regime. From its first modest beginnings around Moscow, Russia has for centuries expanded constantly in all directions. But in no direction has this expansion so preoccupied the Russian mind as that towards the south, towards the Middle East. The desire to possess the Straits and the Persian Gulf area, to obtain "warm water" ports and control of their approaches, has been a Russian dream for 500 years and the motivating force of a policy of action for at least half that period.

It is this dream which largely explains the many Russian-Turkish and Russian-Persian wars during recent centuries and which also explains the current Soviet activity. The Tsars felt that Russian possession of these areas, particularly the Straits, was essential for economic and strategic reasons. The Soviets have made it clear that they share this view. The Tsars resorted to military aggression and diplomatic maneuvers to gain their objective, and also made good use of subversion by exploiting the religious ties between the Orthodox Christians of the area and the Russian Orthodox Church. Military action, diplomacy, and subversion are all familiar weapons in the Soviet arsenal, also.

The Tsarist Era

The dream began in the 15th Century before a Russian state as such even existed. In 1472, Ivan III, Grand Duke of Moscow, married Sophia (Zoe) PALEOLOGA, niece of the last Byzantine Emperor and, as husband of Sophia, assumed the role of protector of the Orthodox Church and successor of the Byzantine Emperors. The double-headed eagle used by the latter as a symbol was adopted as the Russian emblem (it so remained until the fall of the empire in 1917), and some years later Ivan's grandson, Ivan IV, known as Ivan the Terrible, adopted the title of Tsar, the Russian version of the Byzantine (Roman) "Caesar." It was this vague desire and ambition to recreate the Byzantine Empire with themselves as emperors which first impelled the Russian rulers to look longingly to the south.

The first extensive gains in that direction came during the reign of Ivan IV (1533-84) when his forces defeated the Tatars of Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556), thus gaining possession of the entire length of the Volga

and pushing the Russian border to the Caspian. The new border then remained largely unchanged for the next century.

It was Peter I, known as Peter the Great, who first converted this vague dream, which was largely religious in origin, into a policy of action based on strategic and economic considerations which ever since then has characterized Russian ambitions. When he came to the throne in 1682, the Black Sea was a Turkish lake: the Ottoman Sultan ruled all the littoral and only Turkish ships were allowed to sail thereon. He determined to break this monopoly. His first move came in 1695, when he led his armies against the fortress of Azov. The assault failed; but a second in 1697 was successful, and Russian possession was confirmed by a formal treaty concluded in 1702.

This was but the first of a series of Russo-Turkish wars which occurred intermittently from that time until the 20th Century. In less than a decade, in fact, Russia and Turkey were again at war. In 1711, Peter invaded the Ottoman Empire by way of Bersarabia, but finding himself surrounded by superior Turkish forces, was compelled to sue for peace. Under the Treaty of Pruth, he was obliged to return Azov, to destroy the fortress of Taganrog which he had built on the Sea of Azov, and to withdraw the Russian ambassador from the Porte.

Peter registered no further gains for Russia at the expense of Turkey; but activity in the Caucasus and in Transcarpia continued and in 1721 war was declared against Persia. By the peace treaty of 1723, Persia was forced to cede Baku, Derbent, and the provinces of Gilan, Mazanderan, and Ostarabad. As it turned out, these were only a temporary acquisition, for Peter's successor, the weak Empress Anne, was persuaded to return them to Persia in the Treaty of Resht of 1732.

It will be seen from the above that in a territorial sense, Peter did little for Russia in its drive to the south, for what he won he was either forced later to yield himself or was yielded by his successor. But his contribution was nonetheless important, for it was he who, by his insistence on the need for warm water ports, made the idea of southward expansion so

integral a part of Russian policy. And whenhe died in 1725, he left behind him a document known as the "Political Testament of Peter the Great," in which he set down for the guidance of his successors his recommendations as to the policy which Russia should pursue with a view to becoming a great empire. One of these recommendations is particularly significant:

> To take every possible means of gaining Constantinople and the Indies (for he who rules there will be sovereign of the world); excite war continually in Turkey and Persia; establish fortresses in the Black Sea; get control of the seas by degrees, and also of the Baltic, which is a double point, necessary to the realization of our project; accelerate as much as possible the decay of Persia; penetrate to the Persian Gulf; reestablish, if possible, by way of Syria, the ancient commerce of the Levant.

There has been some argument as to the authenticity of this testament, i.e., whether it was actually written by Peter or is a forgery. But true or false, it outlines succinctly the policy laid down by Peter and followed consistently by all his successors, not excluding the Communist leaders of Soviet Russia. Constantinople and the Straits and the Persian Gulf, together with the lands lying between--these were the goals of the Tsars, they are now the goals of the Soviets.

From 1733 to 1739, Russia again waged war on Turkey, this time in alliance with Austria. The Russians were spectacularly successful but, when Austria withdrew from the war, Russia felt impelled to conclude the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) whereby she gave up all her conquests except Azov. Almost three decades of peace followed. With the accession in 1762 of Catherine II to the throne of Russia, however, new impetus was given to Peter's policy. Catherine devised grandiose schemes with regard to Turkey; and no longer was military power the only means employed. For the first time subversion--today a favorite weapon of the Communists--was used, with the Russians agitating among the Slavic and Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire. While acknowledging the strategic and economic importance of the Middle East for Russia, Catherine also revived the idea of recreating the Byzantine Empire: she had her second son christened Constantine, gave him a Greek nurse and Greek playmates, and had him taught to speak Greek, all in preparation for the day when he would sit on the throne in Constantinople.

Catherine found a pretext for a new war with Turkey in the differences arising out of the Polish question; and during the fighting from 1768-74, Russian forces were generally successful, both on land, especially in the Rumanian principalities, and on the sea, by means of a Russian flotilla in the Mediterranean.

The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji of 1774 was a triumph for Russia and a disaster for Turkey. Russia, for the first time, gained direct access to the Black Sea, between the mouths of the Dnieper and Bug Rivers, as well as the fortresses of Kerch, Yenikale, Azov, and Kinburn, and the districts of Kuban, Terek, and Kabardia. The Ottoman monopoly on the Black Sea was broken, for henceforth Russian merchant vessels were to have the right to trade freely in the Black and Mediterranean Seas and to pass freely through the Straits. In the religious field, Russia obtained a protectorate over the Christians of Moldavia and Wallachia, the right to erect a church in Constantinople and to intervene in favor of it, and the right for her subjects to make pilgrimages to Palestine. (These concessions were later to be the basis of a Russian demand for recognition as the protector of all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.) Finally, Russia was given the right to maintain an ambassador permanently at the Porte and to establish consulates throughout the Sultan's domains.

Territorially, the treaty represented an even greater gain for Russia than appeared on the surface. Another of its clauses provided for the independence of the Crimean Tatar Khanate, which both Russia and Turkey promised to respect. Only nine years later (1783), however, the Russians occupied and annexed the Khanate. The annexation was later agreed to by Turkey in the Treaty of Jassy (1792) which ended another Russo-Turkish was which began in 1787. By that treaty Turkey was also forced to cede an additional stretch of Black Sea coast, between the Bug and Dniester Rivers. Thus, as the result of Catherine's vigorous pursuit of the policy laid down by Peter, Russia by 1792 had become a significant power on the Black Sea and had taken major steps towards her ultimate goal of taking Constantinople and the Straits.

In 1806, the two countries were once again at war; and in the first rush Russian armies occupied Moldavia and Wallachia. A suspension of the fighting was brought about in 1807 when Napoleon, who had also been at war with Russia, concluded the Treaty of Tilsit with Tsar Alexander and offered to mediate the Russo-Turkish conflict. In their discussions, in which the main topic was not peace but the partition of Turkey, Napoleon agreed to Russian annexation of Moldavia and Wallachia but refused to agree to Alexander's demand for Constantinople. For its part, however, Turkey refused to give up the principalities, so the war was resumed in 1809. The war finally ended with the Treaty of Bucharest in May 1812, on the eve of the French invasion of Russia which the Russians knew was coming and for which they wanted to prepare. Under the treaty, Russia agreed to evacuate the principalities but kept Bessarabia, which thus advanced her border to the Pruth River.

The Greek war of independence, which Russia had been largely responsible for stirring up, brought Russia into conflict with Turkey again in 1828. The fighting ended in 1829 with the Treaty of Adrianople, which not only assured Greek independence--which was the ostensible purpose of the war--but also further territorial acquisitions by Russia. Turkey was forced to cede to the latter the Caucasian fortresses and districts of Anapa, Poti, and Akhaltsikh, and to renounce all Turkish rights over Imeritia, Mingrelia, and Abkhasia. Russia thus completed her control of the eastern Black Sea coast.

In the meantime, the Russians had not neglected Persia. The territorial acquisitions from Turkey under the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji had brought Russia to the border of Persian territories in the Caucasus. Moreover, in 1783, the King of Georgia, over which Persia claimed sovereignty, had accepted Russian suzerainty in return for aid against the Persians; and this kingdom was annexed outright by Russia in 1801. The conflict of Persian and Russian interests led to wars in 1796 and in 1807-13. The Treaty of Gulistan (1813) resulted in important gains for Russia, for Persia was forced to cede the provinces of Baku, Karabagh, Shirwan, Derbent, Shaki, and Talish,

to renounce all rights to Georgia, Daghestan, Mingrelia, and Abkhasia (which the Russians had already claimed and occupied), and to agree to domination of the Caspian by the Russian Navy.

War between the two countries occurred again between 1826 and 1828; and by the Treaty of Turkmanchai (1828), Persia ceded the provinces of Erivan and Nakhshivan, thereby establishing the Perso-Russian border in the Caucasus at the Aras River, where it still remains. In addition, Russia obtained preferential economic treatment expressed in law customs duties and in other trading privileges; secured capilulatory rights for her subjects; and in return guaranteed Persian dynastic interests, which, in itself, amounted to a veiled protectorate.

To return to Turkey. Only three years after the Treaty of Adrianople, Russia scored a new success at the expense of Turkey, though this time by diplomacy rather than war. Posing as a friend of the then hard-pressed Sultan, Russia offered her assistance in defeating the rebellious Mohammed Ali of Egypt, whose armies were threatening Constantinople. The result was the Treaty of Hünkar Iskelesi (1833), which marked the climax of Russian success in Turkey and brought the Ottoman Empire very close to complete dependence on its northern neighbor. The treaty openly provided for a defensive alliance between the two countries; while its secret clauses gave Russia a uniquely privileged position concerning the Straits, for Turkey promised to close them to any power at war with Russia but to permit Russia full freedom of passage in war or peace. The result was a veiled Russian protectorate over the Ottoman Empire. The situation, however, incurred the displeasure of the other European powers; and when war between the Sultan and Mohammed Ali broke out again in 1839, the Great Powers--Britain, Austria, Prussia, and France, together with Russia--imposed a settlement and, by the 1841 Convention of the Straits, which was negotiated at the same time, ended the privileged position of Russia and provided for a more equitable arrangement.

This was a set-back for Russia; and in the following years she attempted to re-coup the situation by an effort to persuade the other Powers to agree to the eventual partition of the Ottoman Empire--Russia, of course, to get

Constantinople and the Straits as her share. It was at this time that Tsar Nicholas I made his famous statement about "the Sick Man of Europe," suggesting in conversations with British diplomats that the "Sick Man's" estate should be divided in an orderly manner before his impending death.

Russian insistence on meddling in Turkish affairs, which culminated in a demand that Turkey sign an alliance with Russia and also recognize the latter's right to protect all Orthodox Christians in the Sultan's domains (about 12 million souls), led to the Crimean War (1854-56), in which Britain, France, and Sardinia came to the aid of Turkey. The resulting Treaty of Paris (1856) was another serious reverse for Russia's ambitions, for she had to renounce her protectorate over the Rumanian principalities, cede Bessarabia back to Turkey, and, most serious of all, agree to the demilitarization of the Black Sea, which meant the termination of all Russian naval establishments and the destruction of all shore installations and fortifications. Since Russia, without naval support on the Black Sea, would find it difficult to resume her aggressions against Turkey, the treaty in effect gave the latter country a new lease on life and halted--for the time being, at least--Russian expansion in the Black Sea and towards the Mediterranean.

The new arrangement was not destined to last very long. In 1870, while the attention of Europe was focused on the Franco-Prussian War, Russia took advantage of the situation to denounce the demilitarization clauses of the Treaty of Paris. She also began to stir up rebellion among the Sultan's Balkan subjects. Then in 1877, allegedly to support the Balkan rebels, who by then were waging a full-scale war against Ottoman forces, Russia declared war on Turkey. As so many times in the past, the Russians were successful in their contest with the Turks and dictated a victor's peace at San Stefano in 1878. The provisions, in fact, were so favorable to Russia that Britain, Austria, and France, alarmed at this new manifestation of Russian ambitions, protested and forced the substitution of the Treaty of Berlin (1878). Nevertheless, Russia still profited, for the Berlin accord provided for the cession to Russia of southern Bessarabia andof Kars, Ardahan, and Batum. These were destined to be the last territorial acquisitions at the expense of Turkey.

In Transcaspia, Russian expansion still proceeded. In 1837, Russia had occupied the Persian island of Ashur Ada in the Bay of Astarabad and, in 1869, the city of Krasnovodsk, which had been under nominal Persian suzerainty. Russian expeditions in 1873 conquered the hitherto independent Khanates of Khiva and Bukhara, leaving the Turkoman steppe--a nominal Persian possession--encircled on three sides by Russian territory. This area was occupied in 1881 when the Russians broke Turkoman resistance at the battle of Geok Tepe, and in the same year Russia and Persia agreed on the Atrek River as their boundary east of the Caspian.

Since that time, no important areas have passed from Persian to Russian possession, although border rectifications have occurred from time to time. But this does not mean that Russian influence in Persia stopped increasing. During the last two decades of the 19th Century, Russian economic influence, which had been initiated by the 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchai, was further expanded by a number of far-reaching concessions (banking, road and railway building, telegraph lines, fisheries, insurance, etc.), which gave Russia virtual control of Persia's economy. That control, at least over northern Persia, was solidified in 1907 by a Russian-British rapprochement. Throughout the 19th Century, British opposition had played a large role in balking Russian ambitions in Persia as in Turkey. Now they agreed to settle their differences, and the new accord recognized as a Russian zone of influence the five northern provinces of Persia, including in central Persia such cities as Qum, Kashan, Tehran, Isfahan, and Nfazd. All these steps were clearly directed toward the ultimate goal outlined by Peter the Great, namely, expansion to the Persian Gulf. As Novoe Vremya, a leading conservative St. Petersburg newspaper, had stated on 28 April 1901, "We do not desire India, but we must get down to the Persian Gulf."

The outbreak of World War I appeared to the Russians as a golden opportunity to obtain the long-desired Straits. During the previous century, her efforts to that end had been presistently thwarted by the other European powers, particularly Britain, whose policy it had been to keep the Ottoman Empire intact. The situation was now radically changed: Russia was an ally of England and France, while Turkey was in the ranks of the enemy and therefore

could no longer claim the support of Britain and France for the maintenance of her integrity. As P.N. Milyukov, later to be Foreign Minister in the 1917 Provisional Russian Government, wrote in 1915:

> The participation of Turkey in the war on the side of our enemies has made it possible to put on the order of the day the solution of the age-old problem of our policy in the Near East. The acquisition in complete possession of the Bosporus and the Dardanelles together with Constantinople, and of a sufficient part of the adjacent shores to insure the defense of the Straits, must be the aim of this policy for the time being. /CHEGO ZHDUT ROSSIYA OT VOINY (What Does Russia Expect from the War?), Petersburg, 1915, p. 57./

This was exactly the policy which Russia did, in fact, pursue. She now had no difficulty in persuading Britain and France of the advisability, if not the necessity, of a post-war partition of Turkey; and on 18 March 1915, a secret agreement was concluded between Russia on the one hand and Britain and France on the other, which provided that at the war's end Russia would be free to annex:

> Constantinople, the western coast of the Bosporus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles; Southern Thrace as far as the Enos-Midia line; the coast of Asia Minor between the Bosporus and the River Sakarya and a point on the Gulf of Ismid to be defined later; the islands in the Sea of Marmara and the Islands of Imbros and Tenedos.

Russia was at long last to have her "warm water" port, to obtain the long-desired Straits. But this was not all, for a subsequent agreement reached in St. Petersburg on 26 April 1916, forming part of what is generally known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, recognized Russia's right also to annex the Turkish provinces of Erzurum, Trabzand, Van, and Bitlis, as well as territory in the northern part of Kurdistan along a line from Mush, Siirt, Ibn Omar, and Amadiya, to the Persian border, comprising in all an area of roughly 60,000 square miles.

The Soviet Era

With the collapse of the Tsarist regime, the Bolshevik Revolution, and Russia's withdrawal from the war, it seemed that an end had finally come to the Russian dream of expansion to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The Allies no longer felt bound by their treaty commitments to Russia inasmuch as the latter had made a separate peace with the Central Powers; while for their part, the Bolsheviks published, and simultaneously denounced,

the secret wartime treaties with the statement that Russia henceforth would respect the territorial integrity of its neighbors. "Constantinople," they proclaimed, "must remain in the possession of the Muslims." Furthermore, by 1921 the Soviet government had concluded treaties of friendship with Turkey in which Russia returned Kura and Ardahan, which had been acquired in 1878, and with Persia, in which Russia renounced all privileges and concessions acquired during the Tsarist era.

The change in Russian policy, however, was more apparent than real. The Bolsheviks (i.e., Communists) were committed to the doctrine of world revolution, and the Middle East was not excluded from their plans. The theme of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism was a major theme of their propaganda; and almost immediately after seizure of power, they began to push the idea of "Revolution in the East," with the expectation of using Russia's Muslims to sway the sentiments of Muslims in other lands. The time seemed opportune: the Ottoman Empire was falling apart and with it Turkey's temporal and spiritual leadership of the Muslim world, and something akin to chaos prevailed throughout the Middle East. Hence, on 17 December 1917, only a month after the Revolution, the Bolsheviks issued their "Appeal to Muslim Workers in Russia and the East," hoping that public renunciation of Tsarist claims and ambitions would rally all Muslims to Moscow's cause. The "Conference of the Peoples ofthe East," held in Baku in September, 1920, was another part of the Bolshevik program. The antagonism to the Bolsheviks among Russia' own Muslims, however, soon demonstrated the futility of this approach.

The expressed Bolshevik desire to "liberate the Middle East from colonialism," whichis still reiterated today, fell before reality; and it soon became clear that Soviet policy was dictated by practical power considerations rather than altruism. To phrase it differently, the Soviet government quickly reverted to the Tsarist conviction that Russian access to the "warm waters" of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf and security against attack from the West could only be assured by doing away with the independence of

Turkey and Iran.

The Soviet attempts to reestablish and extend Russian influence in the Middle East during the period between the two world wars were not successful. The Turks, while they were engaged in establishing their republic, were willing to accept material aid from the Soviets but no more; they had had too much experience with Russian ambitions to credit the Communist protestations of a change of heart. The Persians were at first impressed by Soviet avowals of friendship and the cancellation of all Tsarist concessions, but they were soon alarmed by the Soviet instigation of a Communist revolt in the province of Gilan and, later, by Soviet efforts to establish a network of espionage, propaganda, and subversion in northern Iran. And in all areas of the Middle East, including all the new Arab states, the Communist ideology failed to make appreciable headway.

On 23 August 1939, Nazi Germany and Communist Russia signed a Treaty of Nonaggression, thus paving the way for the outbreak of World War II. During the following year, Germany proposed that the two states further cement their relations by joining with Italy and Japan in a Four-Power Pact. The offer presented Russia with a new opportunity to resume its march to the south. On 26 November 1940, Schulenberg, the German Ambassador in Moscow, informed Berlin that the Soviet Union was prepared to sign the pact provided certain conditions were appended. One of these provided for the establishment of a Russian naval base on the Straits, while another read: "Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union." A glance at a map will clearly show that the Soviet Union was, in effect, announcing its intention to annex a large part of Turkey and Iran as well as the greater portion of Iraq.

Fortunately for the Middle Eastern countries, Germany and Russia were unable to agree on the division of the envisaged spoils; and as is well known, German forces invaded Russia on 21 June 1941. Up to the last moment, however, Russia entertained hopes of achieving her ambitions in the Middle East through agreement with Germany. Just one week before the German attack, Molotov was in Berlin where, on behalf of the Soviet government, he offered

Germany a full military alliance against England and her allies in return for, among other things, complete control of the Dardanelles, a free hand in Iraq and Iran, and an important position in Saudi Arabia so as to assure Russia domination of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden.

During the war, Russia, in conjunction with Britain, occupied Iran, with the clear understanding and promise that both countries would withdraw their troops within six months of the end of the war. Britain fulfilled her promise, but the Soviets refused to do so. Instead of withdrawing her troops, the Soviet Union used them to sponsor and protect an autonomous Communist-controlled government in Azerbayon, to help establish an autonomous Kurdish Republic in the Mahabad region, to force the Iranian Premier in April 1946 to grant an oil concession to the Soviet Union, and in general to consolidate Soviet influence in the country. It was not until May 1946, after Iranian protests to the United Nations Security Council had brought down on the Soviets the condemnation of the entire world, that Soviet troops were withdrawn.

In the meantime, Turkey had not been neglected. In June 1945, Russia demanded of that country that she return Kars and Ardahan, grant military bases on the Bosporus and Dardanelles to the Soviets, and agree to a revision of the 1936 Montreux (Straits) Convention exclusively by Turkey, Russia and the other Black Sea powers (i.e., Communist-controlled Bulgaria and Rumania). As an added pressure on Turkey, three important Soviet newspapers, on 20 December 1945, published an article written by two Georgian scholars who demanded that Turkey "restore" to the Georgian SSR a Black Sea coastal region 180 miles long and 75 miles wide, which comprised eight Turkish provinces. Turkey refused to accede to these demands; and the strained Soviet-Turkish relations were partly responsible for the enunciation in 1947 of the Truman Doctrine, under which extensive American military and economic aid was given to Turkey with a view to making it possible for her to continue to withstand Soviet pressures.

The Soviet demands on Turkey had significance for the entire Middle East, for a chain of Soviet bases in Turkish territory, together with a predominate influence at Ankara, might well have led to still other results. The USSR

would have been in a position to forestall any Turkish action at the Straits inconsistent with Moscow's desires. The movements of all vessels in the Aegean could be brought under Soviet surveillance. With bases in the Straits area as well as in the Symie region (which might be demanded for protecting the "approaches" to the Straits), Soviet forces could readily be projected into the Mediterranean, making it possible for the Soviets to dominate the sea lanes leading to and from the Levantine and Egyptian ports as well as the oil pipe line termini on the Syrian and Lebanese coasts. These steps would in turn have magnified the Soviet position in the Middle East to an extent where the Arab states might easily have found themselves the object of Communist attention, with the ultimate aim of bringing them within the Soviet orbit. In short, the proposed Soviet "new regime" for the Straits contained elements calculated to reduce Turkey to a Russian protectorate and to lay the foundation for a significant alteration of power in the Middle Eastern-Mediterranean region.

The Soviet designs on Turkey and Iran, having thus been forestalled by the resistance of those states, backed by United Nations action and by the Truman Doctrine, came to a halt. As a result of this situation, together with the press of other problems elsewhere in the world, Soviet activities in the Middle East perceptibly lessened for a time, although it in no way implied an abandonment of Soviet ambitions in the area. The respite was only temporary. Soviet activity began again on a large scale in1955 after the Turkish-Pakistani Mutual Aid Agreement of 2 April 1954 became the Baghdad Pact of 1955. This alliance of Russia's immediate southern neighbors, backed by the free nations of the world, meant that a change of tactics was required. Since the Soviets could not hope to progress through Turkey and Iran without the risk of a world war, the Soviets decided to by-pass those two countries and concentrate on the Arabs. For if the Soviets can increase and consolidate their influence in the states south of the Baghdad Pact countries, the latter will have been out-flanked and can easily be brought to heel when the Soviets deem the time is opportune.

The change in tactics actually began shortly after Stalin's death. In June 1953, in an effort to allay Turkey's fear and to loosen her ties to the

West, the claim against Turkey for Kars and Ardahan was dropped; incendiary broadcasts in Kurdish ended in August 1953; a long-standing border dispute with Iran was settled in December 1954. More ominous have been the increased efforts to woo Arab support. It is significant that Arab governments, once denounced by the Soviets in the most vitriolic terms, are now praised. The Nasser regime in Egypt, for example, as late as 1954 was characterized by Russia's leading Egyptian expert, L. Vatolina, as "madly reactionary, terrorist, anti-democratic, demagogic, etc." /IMPERIALISTICHESKAYA BORBA SA AFRIKU I OSVOBODITELNOE DVIZHENIE NARODOV, Moscow, 1954, p. 97 ff./, while today no praise is too much. The sale of arms to Egypt and Syria serves the Soviet objective threefold: economically, it provides the Soviets with a means to strengthen its grip on the economy of those countries; politically, it adds to the risk of war and so tends to create the instability which is so advantageous to Soviet tactics; and psychologically, it meets with a large appeal in the recipient countries and thus tends to boost Soviet prestige and influence. Such machinations as those recently carried on in Jordan can best be explained as attempts to create confusion, unrest, and uncertainty, which the Communists have discovered by experience are the conditions in which they have the best chance of succeeding.

Conclusion

The Soviet aims in the Middle East today are essentially the same as Russian aims under the Tsars: strategic and economic, but mainly strategic. In Europe, the western Soviet border is protected by a thousand miles of Satellite territory, subjected to Moscow's orders since the end of the war. In the north lies the ice of the Arctic, in the east Communist China. Only to the south are the countries on her borders not subservient to Moscow's will. Russia is acutely aware that the Caucasian oil fields and the industrial centers of southern Russia are within easy flying distance of the Middle East. Hence she is determined to bring this region under her own hegemony. Moreover, in the Middle East lies the world's greatest oil reserves--estimated at more than 50 per cent of the world's total--which Russia would like for herself as well as to deny them to the West, thus not only strengthening her own military and economic potential but undermining that

of the West. Finally, there is the centuries-old Russian determination to acquire warm water ports and direct outlets to the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Today, Soviet Russia, thanks to the entree granted her by Egypt and Syria, is closer to achieving her ambitions than ever before. It must be remembered that it is notnecessary for the Soviet Union's purposes that she occupy and annex the countries of the Middle East, though it should not be imagined that her hunger for more territory is yet appeased. (The fate of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Karelia, Moldavia, Eastern Poland, and Ruthenia bear witness to that hunger) It will be sufficient if she is able, as she was in the Satellite states of Eastern Europe, to undermine existing regimes and establish subservient Satellite governments in their stead and thus control the area as surely as if Russian soldiers were in occupation.

Nevertheless, the lesson of Dog River still remains valid. The last inscription there dates from January 1947 and commemorates not the victory of a conquering army but the attainment of full independance by the Lebanese Republic. Only by keeping the Soviets and Communist influence out of the Middle East, by keeping the Soviets from realizing their centuries-old ambitions for this area, can the Arabs be sure that the Lebanese inscription will be the last. A new inscription, whether it commemorated the passing of the Red Army or the establishment of a Communist-controlled government, would spell the end of Arab, of all Middle Eastern hopes.

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